

Marie Dressler Loses Life Battle: VETERAN ACTRESS DIES AFTER VALIANT ...

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VETERAN ACTRESS DIES
AFTER VALIANT FIGHT

Film Star Dies in Santa Barbara
After Valiant Effort to Live
for One More Picture

SANTA BARBARA, July 28. (Exclusive)—Marie Dressler, whose smiles, tears, triumphs and even her grumpy old ways in character parts throbbed from screens throughout the world, died today.

The end came at 3:35 p.m., after a long struggle against a complication of afflictions that claimed her body but not her spirit.

Physicians who gave up hope for her recovery four weeks ago marveled at her will to live. She wished to make another picture.

Finally her stout old heart quit beating. She slipped out of this life so quietly that a stethoscope was needed to determine the fact. She was 62 years of age.

Death claimed the grand old trouper in a little white guest cottage on the Montecito estate of C. K. G. Billings which had been her home during the last three months of her fight for life.

OLD FRIENDS PRESENT

At her bedside were Dr. Franklin S. Nuzum, Dr. H. S. Schwalenberg, Mr. and Mrs. Allen Breed Walker, close friends of long standing; Minnie Cox, who had been Miss Dressler's maid a score of years, and the latter's husband, James Cox.

From the still room came this statement from the physicians:

"Miss Dressler passed away at 3:35 p.m. The immediate cause of death was uremia (failure of the kidneys to function.) This was complicated by congestive heart failure and by cancer. Cancer was found in the lower abdomen in July, 1931. During the latter part of her illness it spread to vital organs."

The statement was signed by the two medical men who had fought tirelessly for weeks to prolong her life by every known method of medical science.

SANK INTO FINAL COMA

A dozen times they had despaired of saving her, but the actress battled on. They said her fighting spirit carried her over one crisis after another until eighteen days ago, when she drifted into a deep coma from which she never rallied.

Tomorrow, the pain-worn body will be taken home, to the large brick house in Beverly Hills. The journey will be made in an automobile hearse. Funeral arrangements will await consultation with friends by Mr. and Mrs. Walker, who were with her to the last.

SIMPLE RITES FORESEEN

"Although we have foreseen the end, the shock of her actual passing is none the less acute," said Mr. Walker. "We have no plans except to take the body home. To avoid crowds, it is likely that the friendly cortege will visit an unannounced undertaking parlor that the body may rest there until final arrangements are made."

"Her life was so simple, and we know that it was her wish that any last ceremonies be made unostentatious. At the end she simply slept away and for a time we could not realize that she had gone."

Whatever the tribute at her bier, friends and associates felt nothing could surpass the praise, admiration and devotion of millions whom she made to laugh.

GREATEST AT BOX OFFICE

Self-styled an "ugly duckling," Miss Dressler had soared to the heights of fame and twice was acclaimed the world's outstanding actress by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. In Hollywood it was known that a recent poll of 12,000 theater owners and managers named her as a greater box-office attraction than Greta Garbo, Jean Harlow, Janet Gaynor

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Highlights in Career of Marie Dressler—From Comedies to Dramatic Role Leads



In "Reducing," one of her slapstick comedy roles in which Miss Dressler started her climb to the top in motion-pictures.



As 'Min' in "Min and Bill" she won the 1931 academy award.



Accepting the 1931 Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences award from Norma Shearer as Lionel Barrymore looks on.



A late photograph of the beloved star who started her film career when past middle age. The Grand Old Lady of the Screen.



"Tugboat Annie" in which Miss Dressler scored another triumph.



As Marthy in "Anna Christie" she first won recognition as a character actress.



At Hollywood's greatest party November 9, 1933, when she celebrated her sixty-second birthday anniversary.

MARIE DRESSLER'S FIGHT AGAINST DEATH AMAZING

Work in Films Continued for Years After Grand Old Trouper Knew Inevitableness of Doom

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or the mighty rodent, Mickey Mouse. Her popularity was such that merely to bill Marie Dressler meant profits of exhibitors. She profited likewise, with a salary of \$4000 a week. Her last years were the "fat years" predicted by an astrologer years ago.

BEGAN AS CHILD
Fame came on the heels of vicissitudes which would have conquered an ordinary spirit. She began on the stage as a child, soared to stardom, tried the films, went back to the stage and after the World War slumped to the depths.

A friendly turn placed her in a picture in the role of old Marthy in "Anna Christie." Lon Chaney had called her the greatest character actress in the country. That's why she got the part. She stole the picture and zoomed to success.

DID EVERYTHING
She had been everything in the show world, from button-sewer in a wardrobe corner of one-night-stand dressing-rooms to comedienne of the stage and finally a screen star.

Marked success came only after long and bitter struggles, with long years of unemployment, but the old trouper never complained. She was 50 and 1 honestly feel younger today than I did at 25.

Miss Dressler was born in Co-burg, Can., November 9, 1873. Her father was Alexander Koerber, an officer in the Crimean War. Anne Henderson Koerber, her mother, was an English woman.

EMIGRATED TO CANADA
Miss Dressler's father retired from the German army and took his bride to Canada where he taught music. Always restless, moving from town to town, Koerber's income from music lessons was meager and the mother clothed and educated the children as best she could.

The actress' first public appearance was as Cupid on a pedestal at the age of 5 years in a church theatrical performance.

When she was 14 years of age she appeared in an amateur theatrical show at Lindsay, Can., and was laughed at. The laughs made her mad and she joined a roving light opera troupe. Her first job paid \$8 weekly. She was a general utility maid and looked after wardrobes.

ADOPTED AUNT'S NAME
The actress, who had been named Leila at birth, adopted the name of an aunt, Marie Dressler, when she earned a place in the cast and made her debut on the stage.

Before she left home, Miss Dressler's mother realizing that Marie had been denied a public school education because of the family's roving, made the young girl promise to read the daily newspapers carefully each day. She never forgot that promise.

"EDUCATED BY NEWSPAPERS"
"My whole education has been gained from newspapers and from people," Miss Dressler said. "If other people who haven't the opportunity for a high school or college education would only realize it, they could get an education equal to a post-graduate course by reading the daily papers and watching people."

Success followed the footsteps of the ambitious young actress. With the George Baker Opera Company she played queen in "Bohemian Girl," the foolish wife in "Frau Diavolo" and Barbara in "Black Robinson Crusoe." She supported Lillian Russell in "Lady Nicotine." They became great friends.

BURLESQUED JULIET
Miss Dressler made an outstanding hit as Flo Honeydew in "Lady Slavey," a part she played four years. As one of her Joe Weber shows, she played in "Higgledy-Piggledy." She did a Romeo and Juliet burlesque with Sam Bernard and played in an all-star version of "The Rivals." In "Tillie's Nightmare" she introduced the famous song, "Heaven Will Protect the Working Girl."

It was during these successful days that Miss Dressler bridged the formerly uncrossable chasm between the social four-hundred and the theatrical world.

RECOGNIZED BY SOCIETY
She became acquainted with Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish, recognized leader of New York society, while appearing as an entertainer at her home, and the acquaintanceship developed into a lasting friendship. Miss Dressler was said to be the first actress to be recognized socially. She was lavishly entertained here and abroad.

It was not only social leaders who were among her friends. She was a friend of most of the famous men and women in politics, finance and the arts over the world. She knew all the Presidents since Cleveland and often was a guest in the White House.

NEVER FORGOT FRIENDS
Miss Dressler, however, never forgot the friends of her early struggle, the old troupers with whom she wandered from one cheap boarding house to another. The actress carried on a large amount of philanthropic work, the great part of which was unknown to the public.

Miss Dressler made her first motion picture in 1914, a Mack Sennett production of "Tillie's Punctured Romance." In the company with her were two young and unknown players, Charlie Chaplin and Mabel Normand, who skyrocketed to fame because of their success in that film.

EXTENSIVE WAR WORK
The stage, however, was Miss Dressler's first love and she returned to it. Then came the World War, during which the actress toured the country devoting herself to selling Liberty Bonds. At one time she made 149 speeches in twenty-nine days on Liberty Loan drives.

The post-war period found Miss Dressler in desperate circumstances. She was no longer a young woman. She belonged to a past era. Managers were looking for new faces. Vainly she tried to find a job. For nine tragic years Marie Dressler did not work. Her savings practically vanished. Then it was that the films and California seemed to offer her hope.

THEN CAME FILMS
"They don't want old women on the screen," she said. "They want youth and beauty. I wouldn't have a chance."

However, she tried Hollywood. Then, with the aid of her friend, Frances Marion, screen writer, she landed the part of Marthy in "Anna Christie." Success was hers. A long-term contract followed and she appeared in such hits as "Min and Bill," "Reducing," "Politics," "Prosperity," "Emma," "Dinner at Eight," "Caught Short," "Tugboat Annie" and "The Late Christopher Bean."

TEAMED WITH MISS MORAN
For some time she was starred with Polly Moran.

With her usual grit and determination, Miss Dressler spent much of her time during her last days preparing for a new screen role. She was to have made a new picture, "Tish," under the guidance of Irving Thalberg. But death intervened.

It was just when she had reached the zenith of success in Hollywood and signed a long-term contract with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer that Miss Dressler received a death sentence from physicians. They told her she was ill and in such an advanced stage that cure was most unlikely.

NEVER BETRAYED PAIN
Miss Dressler smiled and played gallantly on. She never let the studio suspect her pain and sorrow, nor did the audiences that roared with laughter at her antics on the screen ever suspect her illness.

Sometimes she played in a mist of pain which made actors who played with her tremble with pity. Tears filled the eyes of those few who knew of her heroic battle—the fight of a real trouper to create laughs in the midst of pain.

The crinkly smile of the comedienne was as widely known in Europe as it was in America. And it was the same in real life. For those who came in contact with Miss Dressler knew her as a jolly soul,

full of kindness, good humor and quick wit.

OLD-FASHIONED PARTIES

Her parties were famous. She entertained in the good old-fashioned way, rather than in the modern Hollywood way. She was noted as a good cook and delighted in concocting unusual and delicious dishes for her guests. She loved the mountains, and one of her last parties was given for a few close friends in a mountain retreat up Big Tujunga Canyon, beside a rippling stream.

MAMMOTH PARTY

Miss Dressler's home was a two-story red brick house in Beverly Hills, where she lived with Mamie Cox, her housekeeper, who had been with her seventeen years.

On her birthday a year ago Miss Dressler was honored at a mammoth birthday party. The same year saw her winning the award for the year's best feminine screen performance.

"If I only could let the world know how grateful I am for all that I have been given," she said recently. "I have everything now that anyone could desire. Even a home which I always swore I would never own."

About thirty-four years ago, Miss Dressler married George Hoppert

but soon thereafter he became an invalid. Old troupers recall how he used to sit in a wheel chair between the wings of stages where she played and watch her. Soon thereafter he died and in later years Miss Dressler rarely spoke of that early romance in her life.

CHORUS GIRL TO FILM STAR

Marie Dressler was Hollywood's "grand old old trouper," although the stage might also claim her for its own. The veteran actress had been everything in the show world, from chorus girl to screen star.

Although marked success came to her late in life and after years of bitter struggle, Miss Dressler made no complaint of the long period of unemployment prior to the time she became a film sensation when she portrayed the role of Marthy in "Anna Christie."

"MIDDLE AGE" BEST

"Middle age is the best part of life," she said. "You don't really begin to live or to appreciate life until after you're 50."

"One of the most tragic and pitiful sights in the world is a middle-aged woman who feels that life is over for her and looks and acts accordingly. They are such fools. As soon as their families are reared and their hair is turning gray they fold their hands and give up the game."